U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

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ANTELOPE ALLOTMENT TROUGHS

Location: Within the Antelope Allotment (#04301) approximately 35 miles west of Delta, Utah.
The legal location is as follows:

	Trough at Antelope Reservoir	North Trough
Township:	17 S.	17 S.
Range:	12 W.	13 W.
Sections	NW¼NE¼ of Sec. 30	NE¼ SE¼ of Sec. 11

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in cooperation with Fred Tolbert propose to install two engine case troughs along the existing Antelope pipeline at the locations described above. If approved this project would be constructed during the spring or summer of 2010. An interdisciplinary team has reviewed the proposed action. Their review is included as Appendix A. The attached map (Appendix B) shows the location of this project.

1.1 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

There is no water in the southern portions of the area known as the Wheeler Amphitheater. The purpose of one of these troughs would be to provide water in this area. This would allow livestock grazing the allotment to be more evenly distributed within the allotment and would provide a new watering location for cattle grazing the Antelope Allotment. The other trough would be placed at the Antelope reservoir. This reservoir does not get enough water to supply the needs of cattle grazing the Antelope Allotment unless the water is turned out the stand pipe the stockmen use to load their water trucks. This reduces the water available for the cattle and sheep on the allotments down the pipeline. It also wastes water as it runs across a county road in an earthen ditch to the reservoir. This is enough for the few cattle to water at the reservoir but still does not fill and provide enough water for sheep grazing the Antelope Allotment nor for the cattle grazing the Dome Canyon Allotment. The permittee who grazes sheep on the Antelope Allotment does not desire to water his sheep at the Antelope Reservoir so there is not a need to fill the reservoir with water but only a need to provide cattle a watering location. Antelope and wild horses may also water at these watering troughs.

1.2 CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN(S)

The proposed action is in conformance with the House Range Resource Management Plan, approved on October 8, 1987.

Although the proposed action and alternatives are not specifically mentioned in the plan, they are consistent with its objectives, goals, and decisions as they relate to the range program in that livestock distribution would be improved, which would result in more uniform utilization patterns.

House Range Resource Area Management Plan and Record of Decision; Chapter two, page 27, paragraphs 24, 26 & 27:

Paragraph 24 ”Continue to plan and install structural improvements, such as fences, water developments, cattleguards, etc. on a priority basis as funds become available. Projects must be environmentally acceptable. “

Paragraph 27 “Water Developments will be periodically inspected to ensure that they remain in usable condition. Preventive maintenance will be performed as needed.”

House Range Resource Area Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan; Chapter two, page 60, Range improvements subpart, paragraph 1:

"Structural improvements would continue to be planned and installed to improve or facilitate management (e.g., livestock distribution, trespass, control, etc.)".

1.3 RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

The proposed action and alternatives comply with the following laws and regulations:

- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- 43 CFR 4100 Grazing Administration-Exclusive of Alaska
- All supplemental authorities listed in Appendix A of the National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1)

This proposed action is consistent with the standards and guidelines for grazing management in that the proposal would improve conditions which would support the desired plant species and maintain properly functioning ecological conditions.

CHAPTER 2
DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Assessment focuses on the Proposed and No Action alternatives. The No Action alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of the proposed action. There are no other alternatives required to address unresolved conflicts of available resources on public lands.

2.1 PROPOSED ACTION

Install two engine case troughs along the existing Antelope pipeline. One trough would be at the existing Antelope Reservoir in the NW ¼ NE ¼ of Section 30 of T.17S., R.12W. and the other would be approximately three miles to the northwest along the county road in the NE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 11 of T.17S., R.13W. One of these troughs would be between the existing pipeline and an existing reservoir that is within one hundred yards of the intersection of two county roads. Should the trough overflow the water would spill into the reservoir. A backhoe would be used to install pipe, valves & valve boxes from the existing line to the trough which would be less than 50 feet from the existing line. The other trough (north trough) would be placed within 20 feet of the existing pipeline and would be within 50 feet of the existing county road. The proposed locations are on mostly level ground but the backhoe would be used to insure that the location where the troughs would be located would be level. Posts would be installed on the four corners of the engine case trough to secure the trough in place. The back hoe would also be used to remove the trough from the transport and place it in the location where it would be installed/.

The troughs would be kept functioning through routine maintenance. This may include replacement of the trough, repairing of leaks, replacement and/or installation of valves, air vents, drains, filters, valve boxes, and other such items necessary to keep the troughs functioning as it should. Heavy equipment may or may not be required for trough maintenance.

Support equipment would include a transport for the backhoe, pickup trucks, and trailers for transport of the trough and other materials.

Existing roads and trails would be used for travel to the trough locations.

Trash/debris would be removed from public land and discarded at an authorized facility.

The proposed project would be subject to valid prior existing rights-of-way (ROW). ROW holders would be contacted and coordinated with.

Equipment used in construction activities would be cleaned prior to entering the project area to prevent the spread of weeds.

Surveys for migratory bird nests would be conducted prior to construction if the project is to be constructed between March 15th and July 15th. If an active nest is identified, a 200 ft. no-activity buffer is to be established for the nest site until young have fledged and/or the nest becomes non-active.

Surveys for raptors would be conducted prior to construction if the project is to be constructed between January 1st and August 31st. Should active nests be discovered work may not be done within 0.5 miles of Golden Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk nests. Smaller species such as burrowing owls require a 0.25 mile buffer and extends from March 1 – August 31.

2.2 NO ACTION

Do not install engine case troughs in the proposed locations.

CHAPTER 3
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING

The affected environment of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives were considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist, Appendix A. The checklist indicates which resources of concern are either not present in the project area or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. Resources, including those covered by supplemental authorities, which could be impacted to a level requiring further analysis are; 1) rangeland health, 2) wilderness/WSA, 3) visual resources, 4) areas with wilderness characteristics and 5) livestock grazing. They are described in Chapter 3 and impacts on these resources are analyzed in Chapter 4 below.

Vegetation at the proposed locations and between the trough locations and the adjacent county roads has previously been disturbed. Annuals (mainly cheatgrass) are all that grow at the project locations. Elevation is between 5,781 feet above sea level at the trough location at Antelope Reservoir and 6,000 feet above sea level at the other trough location. Average annual precipitation for the area in which the troughs would be constructed is approximately 10 inches. The allotment has historically been grazed by sheep November through April and cattle May through September.

3.1 RANGELAND HEALTH

Rangeland Health Assessments were completed for the allotment during July of 2000. Grazing use as currently authorized was found to be in compliance with rangeland health standards and in conformance with the guidelines for grazing management.

3.2 WILDERNESS/WSA

The north trough is located on the boundary of the Swasey Mountain WSA, and therefore the proposed project location is classified as containing wilderness character.

The primary objective of WSA management is to retain the WSA's natural character essentially unaltered by humans during the time it is being managed as a WSA.

The Swasey Mountain WSA offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are throughout the area. Remoteness, rugged terrain, and vegetation all combine to provide outstanding opportunities to be isolated from others.

3.3 VISUAL RESOURCES

The north trough of the proposed project is located on the edge of the Swasey Mountain WSA which is to be managed as VRM Class I. A Class I area is to be managed to

preserve the existing character of the landscape. Any changes to the landscape should be very low and must not attract attention. Management activity in these areas is limited.

3.4 AREAS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

The north trough of the proposed project is located on the edge of the Swasey Mountain WSA which is classified as containing wilderness character. Throughout the Swasey Mountain WSA there are outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. This area provides outstanding opportunities to be isolated from others because of the remoteness, rugged terrain and vegetation.

3.5 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The Antelope Allotment has a few sources of water for livestock. Water is hauled from a standpipe from the Antelope pipeline near the Antelope Reservoir to sheep throughout the allotment. Cattle have not had water hauled to them but have used existing water sources. Grazing use near the Antelope Reservoir has been made by sheep and cattle. However, due to recent changes in water delivery to the reservoir there has only been enough water in the reservoir for a few cattle to water there and the sheep have been watered in other locations. Grazing use in the vicinity of the proposed north trough has been very light.

CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.0 DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

Resources which could potentially be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed action were described in Chapter 3. Potential impacts to these resources are analyzed under the Proposed and No Action alternatives.

4.1 PROPOSED ACTION

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed action to those resources described in the affected environment (Chapter 3 above)

RANGELAND HEALTH

The proposed project would improve livestock distribution, even out utilization patterns and reduce impacts to vegetation in areas that have been used heavily in the past. This would improve or maintain rangeland health. Possible impacts that could have the potential to increase soil erosion would be reduced (standard #1). The potential for maintenance or improvement of desired vegetation would be increased by the proposal (standard #3). With maintenance or improvement of desired species, properly functioning ecological conditions are also maintained.

WILDERNESS/WSA

The north trough of the proposed action/project would be in conflict with the Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands Under Wilderness Review for Livestock Developments, as stated "New, permanent livestock developments may be approved if, after completing a similar analysis as required in Section 2.a, they truly enhance wilderness values, and the developments are substantially unnoticeable...[and] must not require motorized access if the area were designated as wilderness." The north trough would increase the potential for maintenance or improvement of desired vegetation and therefore increase the potential for maintenance of properly functioning ecological conditions throughout the allotment including within the WSA. However, the trough would be noticeable and would require motorized access from the adjacent county road (which is within 50 feet of the proposed trough location.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Because the north trough would be noticeable it would be in conflict with the management objectives for a designated VRM Class I area.

AREAS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Because the north trough would be noticeable it would detract from the naturalness of the area. However, more even distribution of livestock within the allotment would improve vegetation condition and contribute positively to the naturalness of the area.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The proposed troughs would allow for improved management of the allotment. There would be two new water troughs for cattle grazing within the allotment. Each of these new troughs would be in different portions of the allotment which would allow for greater control of where cattle were grazing.

Utilization patterns would be improved as livestock distribution is improved. Portions of the allotment are not grazed as much as others. This results in areas which are over utilized and areas which could support more use. Installing the north trough at the proposed location would encourage livestock to graze areas that are slightly or lightly grazed and reduce use of areas that receive heavier use. The trough at the Antelope Reservoir would continue an existing source of water.

As utilization patterns become more even through improved distribution of livestock desired forage species are more easily maintained or have the potential to increase. Increases in desired species are more likely to occur in areas that have been more heavily utilized in the past. With maintenance of desired species, properly functioning ecological conditions are also maintained.

4.2 NO ACTION

If the proposed project were not constructed the need for the proposed action to improve livestock distribution and more evenly distribute grazing use of the allotment would not be met. There would be no environmental impacts from the proposed action since it would be denied.

RANGELAND HEALTH

The increased potential for maintenance and improvement of desired species and the potential for reduced erosion through maintenance of these species would not be met. Since current management has been determined to be in compliance with rangeland health standards it is anticipated that rangeland health would continue to be maintained.

WILDERNESS/WSA

Those characteristics of the land which have been designated as wilderness character would not be affected. Therefore, there would be no effect to wilderness or to the Swasey Mountain WSA.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Since there would not be a visible ground disturbance or placement of something noticeable on the ground there would be no change and no affect on visual resources.

AREAS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Those characteristics of the land which have been designated as wilderness character would not be affected.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Livestock distribution and utilization patterns would remain as they currently are. The same portions of the allotment would continue to be slightly used and the areas that are currently heavily used would continue to receive that same amount of use. The ability to control where cattle are within the allotment would not be improved.

Since utilization patterns and livestock distribution would not be improved, desired forage species have the potential to decrease in areas more heavily utilized by livestock. With the decrease of desired species the potential for ecological processes to function improperly is also increased. This may result in changes to the grazing schedule of the area to protect resources.

4.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

Common activities in the area consist of livestock grazing, hunting, camping, wood gathering, wildlife viewing, mineral exploration, and OHV use. Except for OHV use, most of these activities have been occurring over the past 80-100 years.

Wildlife species within the area have experienced these types and levels of disturbance over the past 80-100 years. Mineral activity including mining and exploratory drilling for oil and gas and seismic exploration has declined since the 1980's. Recently OHV use and seismic exploration have increased. The other activities may not be expected to increase during the foreseeable future.

There are currently no other actions within the proposed project area that would contribute cumulatively to the resources discussed above.

CHAPTER 5
PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

During preparation of the EA, the public was notified of the proposed action by posting on the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on 2/12/2009. No one has contacted the BLM in response to this notice. The process used to involve the public included sending letters to the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Millard County Planning and Zoning. Meetings with the permittees and the State School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration were also held to discuss the project (see Table 5.1). A public comment period was not offered because very little interest in the proposal has been expressed.

Table 5.1 List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Clair Halterman and Fred Tolbert - Grazing Permittees on the Antelope Allotment. Gene Snow – Grazing Permittee on the Dome Canyon Allotment	To develop the project proposal.	Selected trough locations and determined the type of trough to be installed. Clair Halterman indicated that the proposed troughs would not interfere with his sheep operation.
WorldCom Network Services, INC	Power line right-of-way	No Response
UDWR	Consult with UDWR as the agency with expertise on impacts on game species.	No Response.
Millard County Planning and Zoning	Consult with the county planning and zoning to identify any concerns the county may have.	No Response.

An interdisciplinary team analyzed the impact of the proposed action upon the various resources. Their analysis is attached (Appendix A) and was incorporated into the environmental assessment. The table below shows which specialist analyzed which resources.

Table 5.2 List of Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document
Matt Rajala	Natural Resource Specialist – NEPA Coordinator	Impact analysis for air quality, environmental justice, soils, prime & unique farmlands, floodplains, and socioeconomics.
Bill Thompson	Rangeland Management Specialist	Used the analysis of the various specialists to prepare the environmental assessment. Impact analysis for wetlands/riparian zones, range management, livestock grazing, and Rangeland Standards and Guidelines

David Whitaker	Rangeland Management Specialist	Impact analysis for T&E plant species, vegetation including special status species other than FWS candidate or listed species.
Jim Priest	Wildlife Biologist	Impact analysis for wildlife, T&E animal species, and fish & wildlife including special status species other than FWS candidate or listed species
Eric Reid	Rangeland Management Specialist	Impact analysis for wild horses
Steve Bonar	Outdoor Recreation Planner and Wilderness Specialist	Impact analysis for wilderness/WSA, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, wild & scenic rivers, recreation, wilderness characteristics, and visual resources.
Clara Stevens	Realty Specialist	Impact analysis for lands and access
Jerry Mansfield	Geologist	Impact analysis for paleontology, energy resources, and geology and mineral resources/energy production.
Justin Johnson	Fuels Specialist	Impact analysis for fuels/fire management
Misty Haines	Archeologist	Impact analysis for cultural resources
Joelle McCarthy	Archeologist	Impact analysis for Native American religious concerns
RB Probert	Biological Science Technician	Impact analysis for invasive, non-native species
Brent Crosland	Range Technician	Impact analysis for woodland/forestry and Wastes (hazardous & solid).
Paul Caso	Rangeland Management Specialist	Impact analysis for water quality & watershed

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST

APPENDIX B
MAP OF THE PROJECT